

Gold Team Medal Nomination: Camp Minden Dialogue Committee and Tulane Response

Camp Minden Dialogue Committee: David Gray, Diane Taheri, Joseph Hubbard, Jason McKinney, Tom Ruiz, Greg Fife, Adam Adams, Susan Webster, Ronnie Crossland, Carl Edlund.

The community near Camp Minden expressed grave concern with the remedy EPA had planned for the destruction of 16 million pounds of abandoned military propellant at the Camp Minden site in Minden Louisiana. Due to public concern associated with a potential creation of dioxin from the ambient chlorine in the air, EPA suspended the time-critical Removal Action.

In an effort to provide the local community with an opportunity to solicit input from the community and to allow the community with a means to express their concerns associated with the Open Burning alternatives being considered to destroy 16 million pounds of abandoned military propellant, the Camp Minden Site Team, facilitated the creation of a Dialogue Committee made up of citizens, local officials, and other parties interested in voicing their concerns about the solution. The process involved the Committee developing their own understanding of the threats and dangers that existed from more than 16 million pounds of rapidly degrading explosives. The Committee also sought out vendors with potential technologies to address the destruction of the smokeless powder. The Committee developed selection criteria for the State's Technical Evaluation Panel to choose the contractor to perform the work. The criteria closely mirrored the Key Principles of Superfund Remedy Selection.

Another product of the Committee is the presentation of several workshops and public meeting. Such topics as environmental data, local emergency response planning, and a briefing on the former Louisiana Army Ammunition Plant, that became Camp Minden, and was listed on the National Priorities List in 1989. The Dialogue Committee and the local community have been participating in the workshops as well as commenting on pertinent plans that are part of the cleanup process.

Tulane Burkholderia Team: John Martin, Bill Rhotenberry, Mike McAteer, Chris Petersen, Erica Canzler, Mike Nalipinski, Shawn Ryan.

The Tulane Burkholderia Response Team is recognized for their collaborative efforts in helping the State of Louisiana's Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOSHEP), St Tammany Parish, U. S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) address a biological response related to Burkholderia pseudomallei (B. pseudomallei) at the Tulane National Primate Research Center (TNPRC). This was not a typical biological response, in which FBI and EPA work together, in fact, FBI was not involved. With CDC as the lead, the EPA team was called up to provide guidance, to address the public and media on response related issues and to develop a sampling and analysis plan which would be implemented by staff from the Tulane National Primate Research Center. As a result of the EPA team's involvement in this response, the Agency is working with CDC to ensure all of the other biological agent laboratories across the country have an emergency response plan in place which outlines procedures to take in the event a biological agent is accidentally released to the environment.

Gold Individual Medal Nomination:

John Martin - Over the years, John Martin has served as the Region's lead on Biological Response Efforts and has coordinated with other Federal Agencies in planning for biological responses. His training and planning were put to the test this year.

Based on the Ebola situation in Dallas, John worked with members of the Consequence Management Division, the lead On Scene Coordinator from the New York Ebola Response, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality staff who were involved in the Dallas Ebola Response, and ATSDR to design an Ebola-based biological decontamination training and exercise for the Region 6 On Scene Coordinators and the Response Contractors. The training was well received by all who attended and participated.

This year, John was assigned two high profile removal actions which required extensive coordination with state agencies and multiple Federal Agencies. Due to the sensitivity of the biological contaminants (Ricin and Burkholderia) John had to work closely with the other stakeholders and ensured Regional and HQ was kept informed of the issues and progress.

When the state of Oklahoma called requesting assistance with the Ricin found in a home, John was deployed to lead the EPA's response. John developed the HASP, workplan for decontaminating the house and removing all of the contaminated items. John coordinated his plans with the OEM's Consequence Management Advisory Division (CMAD) to ensure proper and acceptable protocols were being implemented. Through John's exemplary efforts, in overseeing the cleanup and working with State and Federal partners, the home was found to no longer pose a public health threat. The owner was able to occupy the home.

Within a few days after completing the Ricin removal, John was assigned to help the State of Louisiana's Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOSHEP), St Tammany Parish, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) address a biological response related to Burkholderia pseudomallei (B. pseudomallei) at the Tulane National Primate Research Center (TNPRC). This was a first of this type of response for CDC, which meant that John would have to help guide them along with the way with issues beyond the technical response but with issues associated with the National Framework to Response. John worked with CMAD and the START contractor to develop a sampling and analysis plan which would be implemented by staff from the Tulane National Primate Research Center. John demonstrated great leadership and professionalism handling the situation in front of the press and before GOSHEP.

Outstanding Contributions to International Protection: Brandi Todd

Environmental emergencies along the United States border have the potential to impact other nations making planning and response efforts at the federal level extremely important. A coordinated effort between US and Mexico will be necessary during a catastrophic event in order to save lives, protect public health, and ensure the safety of all persons affected by or responding to the emergency. Brandi Todd, a Region 6 On Scene Coordinator and liaison to the Mexican states, knows the importance of communication during a response and has demonstrated her willingness to go above and beyond the call of duty to meet her customers' needs. Over the years, Brandi has been involved in various emergency response exercises along the US-Mexico border to ensure both sides are prepared to respond.

Every year, Mexico celebrates the "National Day of Preparedness and Response to Chemical Emergencies." In honor of this holiday, each Mexican state along the border hosts a binational exercise. These exercises occur on the same day. The US-Mexico Joint Contingency Plan requires that all binational exercises be reported to the US National Response Center (NRC). Due to a breach in on-line security, the primary means of reporting spills and exercises from Mexico to the NRC is temporarily not in operation. Without Brandi's initiative and attention to details in planning and preparedness, this Mexican National holiday would have fallen short of one of its primary goals.

Brandi identified the potential communication crisis and took steps to assist the US and Mexican federal agencies in overcoming the obstacle. Through intensive coordination with both Mexican officials and the USCG, Brandi was able to negotiate a solution and directly assist with binational notifications. Brandi communicated the importance of the Mexican Federal holiday and binational coordination to the USCG, who is responsible for operating the NRC. Both the USCG and the Mexican agencies agreed to make temporary compromises to their reporting procedures. These compromises, along with the translation services provided by Brandi, allowed for successful binational communication during these politically important exercises. The effort put forth by both Brandi and the USCG, elevated the trust between EPA, the USCG and the Mexican agencies who rely upon this holiday as a demonstration of fortitude in binational cooperation.

On an annual basis, Brandi, as part of a regional border response team, has been involved in conducting successful Knowledge Exchange Projects through the emergency response component of the Border Program. The vision of the Knowledge Exchange is to; (1) promote information sharing and foster cooperation between local, state, tribal and federal agencies in the US and Mexico, (2) ensure stakeholders were recognized and given an opportunity to provide comments and/or concerns, (3) enhance the opportunity for the response community to discuss preparedness and response plans, response capabilities and ongoing activities along the border, (4) provide training with an emphasis on identifying future needs and increased accessibility through the internet or other information resources where applicable, (5) identify future funding and resource needs, (6) increase cultural awareness in order to better address communities in the existing preparedness and response plans, (7) improve communication between the response community, US industries and Mexican maquiladoras in the border area, (8) ensure transparency between local, state, tribal and federal government, (9) identify

areas for improvement and potential corrective actions, (10) generate ideas for future Knowledge Exchange and tabletops. Brandi, in coordination with the fellow team members, implemented a cooperative effort to support a bottom up approach utilizing local resources to provide information on community issues and priorities to ensure the protection of public health and the environment in specific border areas. They brought together a wide variety of local, state, tribal and federal stakeholders in an effort to combine strengths and speak with one voice to identify community needs; increase community awareness; define preparedness, response goals and capabilities; and ensure community sustainability.

As a result of Brandi's efforts, the emergency response coordination and cooperation at the US-Mexico Border has been fortified.

Separate Panel Barbara Metzger Environmental Data Quality Assurance Manager Award:

Region 6 RMP GISviewER – Eric Delgado, Bryant Smalley, Althea Foster, Liz Rogers

With limited resources to manage the vast Risk Management Plan (RMP) Program universe in Region 6, the Branch was searching for a way to identify the RMP facilities on an interactive map which allow for the program to track its accomplishments, highlight facilities which needed to be inspected, and would be a useful tool not only for the RMP staff to target facilities but for the response staff to learn more about the facility to which they were being deployed to response to a release. After multiple brainstorming meetings, the group developed a plan which would build on the Emergency Response Flexviewer. The end result is the RMP GISviewER. This RMP GISviewER was used recently as part of response and a post-response inspection to identify the nearby facilities the group could meet with to conduct LEPC, EPCRA and RMP outreach. The group is planning on expanding the information to capture all of the SPCC and FRP facilities.

REGIONAL AWARD NOMINATIONS:

Bronze – Gary Moore (CES) – More info forthcoming

Bronze – Gold King Mine initial response team: (Mark Hayes, Ronnie Crossland, Susan Webster, Chris Petersen, Althea Foster, John Martin, Mike Torres, Matt Loesel

When the call went out for assistance in those first hours of the Region 6 response to the Gold King Mine Spill, these individuals quickly mobilized to ensure the OSC in the field had all the information available to him in a timely manner and to open the line of communication with Region 8, EPA HQ, and the State of New Mexico. Through their efforts, the flow of information was made possible.

Small Program Award:

EO Tri Agency Workgroup (Steve Mason and Bryant Smalley): Bryant and Steve represented the Agency in the Region 6 TRI-Agency Workgroup which was formed as a result of the Executive Order on Chemical Facility Safety and Security (EO). As a result of their dedication and collaborative manner in

which they worked with the representatives from OSHA and DHS the group was able to develop and begin implementing 8 Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) under the EO well ahead of the established deadline.

SEE of the Year – Jo Horner has worn multiple hats this year, serving as an administrative assistant to the Prevention and Response Branch and as the Administrative Assistant for the Division Director and Deputy Division Director. While assisting the Prevention and Response Branch, Jo has provided exceptional administrative assistance to the entire branch and is always willing to pitch in to help no matter how large or small the task. An example of her assistance is in developing the administrative records for the removal projects, including putting together notices for the paper, contacting local repositories, etc. In August during the Gold King Mine response, Jo aided the Branch in locating a local repository within a matter of minutes of receiving the request. She is an asset to the Branch, the Division and the Region.

Regional Innovation Award:

RMPGISviewer (Eric Delgado, Althea Foster, Bryant Smalley, Liz Rogers)

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Gregg Cooke Strategic Alliance Award -

Nic Brescia (Natural Disaster Operations Workgroup NDOW) - Nic's strengths lie in fostering cooperative working relationships with external groups. Throughout the past several years, and in particular this year, Nic has engaged in regular contact with the TCEQ, TPWD, TGLO and the USCG which facilitate open and productive dialogue and information sharing. Nic has maintained an overall cooperative working relations with external groups. As the EPA lead on the Natural Disaster Operations Workgroup for the state of Texas, Nic facilitated 3 NDOW training tabletop exercises and workshops in Abilene, Beaumont and Corpus Christi. As a result of Nic's efforts in leading these exercises, our response partners within TCEQ, TGLO, TPWD and the USGC have strengthen their response capabilities. Through his efforts with NDOW, Nic has fostered and maintained strong working relationships within the state of Texas. Additionally, in an effort to equip the USCG Strike Team with NDOW products and capability, Nic traveled to Mobile Alabama to help train the staff. His efforts were appreciated by those in attendance. In FY 2015, Nic was involved in developing and/or implementing various exercises and training opportunities including the October 2014 Hurricane Task Force Field Exercise at Lake Whitney, the HQ and Region 6 Water Quality Tabletop, Level A exercises including the Ebola Biological

Decontamination Field Exercise, Boat Safety Training at Lake Lewisville, the July 2015 IMT exercise which was held in Addison, and participated in the CORE NAR exercise. As a result of Nic's efforts, the R6 OSC, Response Support Corps and our State of Texas partners have enhanced their response capability.

Spirit of Change – Jamie Bradsher (LEAN) More to come

Cross Divisional Award – Dive Team More to come

ISEP - none